In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Charged particle beam device, comprising

an emitter array ~~(22)~~ for emitting a plurality of charged particle beams ~~(8)~~;

a lens ~~(12)~~ for imaging the plurality of charged particle beams;

an electrode unit ~~(14)~~ for accelerating the plurality of charged particle beams;

a first control unit ~~(11)~~ and a second control unit ~~(15)~~ for controlling ~~the~~ potential differences between a first potential of the emitter array, a second potential of the electrode unit and a third potential of a specimen , wherein ~~whereby~~ the second potential is capable of accelerating the plurality of charged particle beams with respect to the first potential and ~~whereby~~ the third potential is capable of decelerating the plurality of charged particle beams with respect to the second potential.

2. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ the third potential is capable of defining ~~the~~ a charged particle beam energy on impingement of the plurality of charged particle beams on the specimen such that it corresponds to a potential of maximal 5 kV; and

~~whereby~~ the second potential is capable of increasing the charged particle beam energy to an energy that is at least a factor of 5 higher than the energy corresponding to the third potential.

3. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of ~~according to~~ claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, further comprising:

an extraction member ~~(24)~~ for extracting the plurality of charged particle beams.

4. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, further comprising;

an emitting angle defining member ~~(26)~~ for controlling the emitting angle of the plurality of charged particle beams.

5. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein ~~whereby~~ the emitter array ~~(22)~~ is spaced from a specimen stage ~~(18)~~ by at least 10 mm~~, preferably by at least 50 mm~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, further comprising a further electrode unit ~~(32)~~ biased to a potential which is capable of increasing the charged particle beam energy with respect to the energy corresponding to the third potential by at least a factor of 5.

7. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1 ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~, wherein the lens for imaging the plurality of charged particle beams ~~(8)~~ comprises a unit for providing a homogenous magnetic field ~~(12', 42)~~, wherein the unit for providing [[a]] the homogenous magnetic field comprises at least one coil ~~(44)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 7, wherein ~~according to claim 6, whereby~~ the unit for providing a homogenous magnetic field further comprises at least a second coil ~~(46)~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 7, wherein ~~according to any of claims 6 or 7, whereby~~ the unit for providing a homogenous magnetic field further comprises at least one pole piece ~~(48)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1, ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, further comprising a deflection system for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams ~~(8)~~.

11. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 10, wherein ~~according to claim 10, whereby~~ the deflection system for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams comprises a magnetic deflector ~~(52)~~ for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams.

12. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 10, wherein ~~according to any of claims 10 to 11, whereby~~ the deflection system for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams comprises a plurality of electrostatic deflectors ~~(54)~~ for individually deflecting the charged particle beams.

13. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 10, wherein ~~according to any of claims 10 to 12, whereby~~ the deflection system for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams ~~(8)~~ comprises an electrostatic deflector for deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams.

14. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 6, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the electrode unit, ~~(14)~~ ~~and/or~~ the further electrode unit, ~~(32)~~ or both are [[is]] capable of providing a vacuum isolation.

15. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 14, wherein ~~according to claim 14, whereby~~ the vacuum isolation is provided by a transparency ratio between the area of apertures and the area of solid material of smaller than 1:100~~, preferably smaller than 1:500, more preferably smaller than 1:10000~~.

16. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the third potential is capable of defining the charged particle beam energy on impingement of the plurality of charged particle beams on the specimen such that it corresponds to a potential of maximal 1 kV.

17. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the second potential is capable of increasing the charged particle beam energy to an energy that is at least a factor of 10 higher than the energy corresponding to the third potential.

18. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 7, wherein ~~according to any of claims 9 to 17, whereby~~ the unit for providing a homogenous

magnetic field further comprises a lower pole piece ~~(48c, 49)~~ which is movable with respect to the at least one pole piece ~~(48)~~.

19. (Currently Amended) The charged particle beam device of claim 1, wherein ~~according to any of the preceding claims, whereby~~ the charged particle device is a minicolumn.

20. (Currently Amended) Method of imaging a plurality of charged particle beams comprising ~~the following steps~~:

emitting the plurality of charged particle beams with an emitter array system;

focusing the plurality of charged particle beams on a specimen with a lens;

providing a first potential to the emitter array;

providing a second potential to an electrode unit such that the plurality of charged particle beams are accelerated;

providing a third potential to a specimen such that the plurality of charged particle beams are decelerated before impingement on the specimen.

21. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 20, wherein ~~according to claim 20, whereby~~ the third potential is provided such that the plurality of charged particle beams impinge on the specimen with an energy corresponding to maximal 5 kV; and

~~whereby~~ the second potential is provided such that the plurality of charged particle beams are accelerated to an energy at least ~~a factor of~~ 5 times higher than the energy on impingement on the specimen.

22. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 20, wherein ~~according to any of claims 20 to 21~~ further comprising ~~the following steps~~:

providing a first vacuum in a first region between the emitter array and the electrode unit;

providing a second vacuum in a second region between the electrode unit and the specimen; and

wherein ~~whereby~~ the pressure in the first vacuum is at least a factor of 10 lower than the pressure in the second vacuum.

23. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 20, ~~according to any of claims 20 to 22~~ further comprising ~~the following steps~~:

deflecting the plurality of charged particle beams.